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Leadership Competency Series

Finding the Inner Voice – 8th Habit of Leadership - I

Leadership Competency: Discovering the inner voice and expressing that to inspire others to find their voice is the key for today's leadership success, highlights – M R Chandramowly

CEO: Guruji, I have put through all my learning but the success is moving away like a missed flight. Finally, I feel that I haven't done the last thing they advice me to do.

Guru: What's that?

CEO: To change my name and my office door to north. I know it is not the solution, but …

Guru: So, you are ready to give up all your objective and rational thinking and decide your future by drifting dice? Do you know the story of this successful astrologer who was known for his perfect prediction perfection? He had the reputation to foretell the gender of a baby in a womb perfectly and he never failed. He documented every transaction of his customers and the success was dumfounding. His learned wife, in an intimate situation, asked him about the proficiency behind his success. The astrologer said: "my dear, it is a perfect and simple strategy. When a pregnant woman approaches me for gender prediction, I will use my common sense to read her mind and would tell her about the result based on whatever comes to my mind, a 'boy' or a 'girl'. There is only one choice, male or female. I record just the opposite of what I told her. If I say you will have a 'Boy' baby, I would write 'Girl' in my book. An aspiring mother of a boy baby would contact me only when she delivers a girl baby. Since I document the opposite of what I predicted, she sees that I have recorded the reality and gets convinced about the confusion. However, if she delivers a boy baby, she will approach me to convey her respects; I receive the honour and make the corrections if any, in my computer." The wife had all the admiration for her husband's brilliance.

So my dear friend, most of the predictions are based on practical strategies. Hence, what I suggest to you is to internally focus and change your steps for Leadership Success, than changing your name and direction of your office door or to respond to your forecast messages on cell-phone.

CEO: Then, how do you define leadership success?

Guru: Leadership success is a sequential process of discovering purpose of life, setting goals in the arenas of personal, professional and people areas and to act executing around these goals, balancing with values and priorities.

CEO: Sir, Yes I know this concept. Discover your inner voice, Focus on modeling competencies and execute by aligning goals and roles by enabling systems for results. This was the message of the book " The 8th Habit"

Guru: Yes, we all know about the 7 habits of Stephen Covey. The core message here is to find your own voice first and then inspire others to find their voice. Introspect and find out the inner voice and choices. Then, take initiative to expand your influence in every opportunity around you. My friend, it is "Find your voice, and inspire others to find theirs". You know this and start applying it to yourself.

CEO: Yes, you are right. I recall this interesting statistics. 23,000 workmen, managers and executives took the Harris Interactive Executive Quotient Questionnaire and here are some stunning findings of the study:

- Only 37 percent said that they have clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why
- Only 1 in 5 was enthusiastic about their team's and organizational goals
- Only 17 percent felt that organisations fosters open communication for better ideas
- Only 20 percent fully trusted the organisation they worked for

"The 8th Habit" highlights how some of the organizations are failing to fully engage the passion, talent and intelligence of workforce. The most valuable assets of 20th century companies were its production equipment. The most valuable asset of a 21st century institution, whether business or non-business, will be its knowledge workers and their productivity (Drucker). The mindset of industrial age is ineffective to operate in knowledge era. The Industrial age focus was on machines, capital and things. People were necessary but replaceable. If one needs only a person's body to work and ignore the person's mind and intellect, the person is reduced to a thing. Covey calls this control philosophy as the 'Thing' Mind-set of the Industrial Age. He says that the 7 habits can make a person effective but the 8th habit takes a new dimension to face new realities. He narrates how this journey from effectiveness to Greatness is made by Toyota in transforming its entire workforce into knowledge workers –knowledge about the economy, about the industry, and about the company"

The central line of thought behind the 8th habit is aspiring for achievement. This is one of the findings of Indian ancient wisdom. "When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds. Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world – (The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)". Covey acknowledges this quote apart from Gandhian philosophy and the success story of Muhammad Yunus' vision in creating Grameen Bank of Bangladesh.

Leadership is about the long journey from frustration to fulfillment. So is the definition of life. A search for the purpose in profession or personal life emanate from problems and

frustrations. Most of the people fail to find this inner voice. Only few exercise the choice. There are three choices one can have in any given situation. To do it, not to do it or to do it differently (*kartum, akartum, anyathakarthum*). "To know and not to do, is really not to know – To learn and not to do is not to learn – To understand something but not apply it is really not to understand it". This is how, Stephen Covey comes out with a different approach in giving a new dimension to the ancient thought and it is a wakeup call to people who hibernate themselves in understanding the depth of knowledge without doing and applying by internalization.

When your mind is baffled by dilemma - wolf

set aside attachments and deliberate within self

What else can you trust than the light of introspection?

It is free from bondage, filled with discrimination

(Dr DVG's Mankuthimmana Kagga – 555)

The author is former corporate vice president - HR and currently HRD and Leadership Competency Building Consultant. E-mail: cmowly@hotmail.com